

Book Reviews

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

PRETERM BIRTH: CAUSES, PREVENTION, AND MANAGEMENT—Edited by Fritz Fuchs, MD, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Cornell University Medical College, and Attending Obstetrician and Gynecologist, The New York Hospital, and Phillip G. Stubblefield, MD, Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Harvard Medical School, Boston, and Chairman, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Mt Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, Mass. Macmillan Publishing Co, 866 Third Ave, New York, NY 10022, 1984. 376 pages, \$48.

This much-needed book elegantly addresses the causes, prevention and management of preterm birth in light of our current knowledge. It also offers the reader a glimpse into potential future developments in the field. Dr Stubblefield offers an excellent overview at the beginning of the book and each of the authors reviews his or her separate topic in significant detail so that the reader may grasp not only the current stage of our knowledge and understanding of the specific topic, but also derive an understanding for directions that current research is taking. Most of the chapter authors are renowned experts in their individual areas. There are fine reviews of the social and personal factors related to preterm birth as well as the role of infection. Each of the specific pharmacologic approaches to preventing preterm labor is discussed. I particularly enjoyed the chapters by Creasy and Katz and Grospietsch and Kuhn on β -adrenergic tocolytics, and the review by Johnson and Dubbins of progestins and gamisans and Balasch's review on prostaglandin synthetase inhibitors since each of these groups of compounds singularly and in combination are rapidly becoming our first line of attack in these problems.

The book also discusses the social implications of preterm labor and the impact of regional organization and planning in order to offer services to reduce perinatal mortality.

The text is a complete and detailed review of the subject and, as such, should be of value to students, residents, fellows and practicing physicians. The style is easy to read and the material is presented in a concise and logical fashion. The references are extensive and should satisfy any reader who wishes to broaden his knowledge in this area.

Since our knowledge of the causes, prevention and management of preterm birth is growing and developing rapidly, I would imagine the authors will need to update this text frequently. If they do, they will offer a much needed service to the profession.

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NEUROMUSCULAR MANIFESTATIONS OF SYSTEMIC DISEASE—in the CONTEMPORARY NEUROLOGY Series—Robert B. Layzer, MD, Professor of Neurology, University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine. F. A. Davis Co, 1915 Arch St, Philadelphia, PA 19103, 1984. 409 pages, \$60.00.

This is the latest volume in the Contemporary Neurology Series and like its predecessors it is authoritative and quite readable. The title of this volume suggests that it is directed toward practicing neurologists, but it would equally serve as a valuable resource for specialists who take care of patients in whom disorders of the neuromuscular system develop as a result of systemic illness.

The book is well organized, the first chapter being devoted to a general clinical and diagnostic approach to neuromuscular symptoms and disease. Especially valuable is the conservative approach taken as to the value of muscle and nerve biopsy. Each of the next nine chapters are devoted to those neuromuscular complications that accompany a specific group of systemic illnesses: "Mineral and Electrolyte Disorders," "Endocrine Disorders," "Infection," "Inflammatory and Immune Disorders," "Neoplastic Diseases," "Renal Disorders," "Circulatory Disorders," "Nutritional and Gastrointestinal Disorders" and "Complications of Medical and Surgical

Treatment." Each chapter is more than adequately documented with very recent references. The author has obviously had a great deal of experience with neuromuscular disorders and he successfully uses his personal experience to help clarify some of the controversial information reported in the recent literature.

To this reviewer's knowledge this is the first book devoted to the important clinical topic of neurologic complications of systemic illness since Dr Aita's book which is very outdated. One would hope that the editors of the Contemporary Neurology Series would develop a companion volume, equal in quality to this volume, that would cover the central nervous system complications of systemic illness.

This book is highly recommended for practicing neurologists and other medical specialists. It probably should be required reading for neurology residents and certainly should be available in hospital libraries for medical and surgical residents to use as a valuable resource book.

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SKIN PROBLEMS OF THE AMPUTEE—S. William Levy, MD, Research Associate, Biomechanics Laboratory, and Clinical Professor of Dermatology, University of California, San Francisco. Warren H. Green, Inc, 8356 Olive Blvd, St Louis, MO 63132, 1983. 304 pages, \$39.95.

This text reflects the remarkable experience of a dedicated dermatologist who has been specifically concerned for nearly a third of a century about skin problems of amputees. The introductory chapter provides basic information regarding lower limb dynamics and the structure and function of skin as this relates to an amputee, the residual limb and the prosthesis that will allow substitute function. The remainder of the text is directed toward the effect of the prosthetic interface as it relates to the skin and the pathological states seen among the thousands of amputees Dr Levy has had the opportunity to examine, observe and treat. The last section covers the practical aspects of treatment of the skin disorders which develop.

The man/machine interface is critical to wearing an inert prosthetic substitute for limb loss. Every amputee who wears a prosthesis experiences the skin adaptations and problems incident to this intimate interface. Much of the skin involving the interface is not designed physiologically to undergo the environment and the variety of pressures inherent in prosthetic wearing. This text is an excellent overview and summary of the influence of that environment on the skin as an organ.

The author is to be congratulated for his diligence and for his contribution to an otherwise largely neglected area of dermatology. The text is well illustrated and nicely printed. It should be command reading and available as a reference for all members of the amputee team including the surgeon, the rehabilitationist, the prosthetist and others involved in amputee management. Many amputees themselves would benefit by reading this text.

The wide availability of newer synthetic materials, particularly composite plastics, will further create environmental changes in the prosthetic/skin interface. Dr Levy could have further elaborated on the response to some of the newer materials. This is covered in his text but not specifically in relation to the present research trends in prosthetic materials. Perhaps the second edition of this fine and timely text will extend more completely into the area of new materials and the response of the skin to this unique contact environment.

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